

THE GYPSIES IN  
THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE  
AND THE BALKANS  
IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

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SINCE the appearance of Gypsies in Western Europe during the first half of the fifteenth century, the question of their origin has attracted the attention of many scholars. The definitive answer to this question was given, however, only in the last century, mainly through the research of A. F. Pott<sup>1</sup> and Fr. Miklosich,<sup>2</sup> who, by studying their dialects, firmly established the Gypsies' Indian origin and determined the routes of their migration to Europe.

A careful examination and classification of foreign elements in the different dialects of the European Gypsies enabled Fr. Miklosich to conclude that all of them belong to one and the same stock, and must have lived for a considerable time in the Greek and Slavic speaking lands before settling in their present homes.<sup>3</sup> From the Greek world the Gypsies took an extensive vocabulary, including a number of expressions for abstractions like heaven, time, week, Sunday, and Friday; the numerals seven, eight, and nine; such names as raven, goose, and dove; berry, raisin, cherry, raspberry, leek, onion, and broth; the terminology for the metals lead and copper, table and chair, key, glass, nail, horseshoe, market-town, fair, and mansion. It has also been suggested with good reason that even the designations used by the European Gypsies to identify themselves and their language, *Rom*, *Romāni*, may very well derive from the Byzantine *Romaioi* or *Romania*.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this study is to collect and examine critically all the available historical evidence about the presence of Gypsies in Byzantine lands and to corroborate Miklosich's philological conclusions concerning the long sojourn of Gypsies in the Greek-speaking world before their migration to Central and Western Europe.

The first scholar to study thoroughly the problem of the initial appearance of the Gypsies in Byzantium was the Dutch orientalist J. De Goeje, who put forward the theory that European Gypsies, who passed through Byzantium, are the descendents of a group of Jats, an Indian tribe whose name in ordinary Arabic pronunciation is *Zotti* (plural, *Zott*).<sup>5</sup> This theory is based mainly on an account by the Arab chronicler Tabari, which relates how some 27,000 *Zott* who, early in the ninth century, had been transferred to northern Syria from the valley of the lower Tigris, were taken prisoner when the Byzantines captured Ainzarba in 855 and were transported, with their cattle, to the Byzantine Empire.

<sup>1</sup> A. F. Pott, *Die Zigeuner in Europa und Asien* (Halle, 1844-5), 2 vols.

<sup>2</sup> Fr. Miklosich, *Über die Mundarten und die Wanderungen der Zigeuner Europa's* (Vienna, 1872-7), 8 parts.

<sup>3</sup> Miklosich, *op. cit.*, III, 7.

<sup>4</sup> See A. T. Sinclair, "The Word 'Rom'," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, N.S., 3 (1909-10), 33-42.

<sup>5</sup> J. De Goeje, "Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der Zigeuners," *Verslagen en mededeelingen der k. Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde*, 2nd Ser., 5 (1875), 56-80; De Goeje has expressed the same views in greater detail and with additional remarks in his *Mémoire sur les migrations des Tsiganes à travers l'Asie* (Leiden, 1903).

There are, however, several serious flaws in this ingenious theory, which unfortunately have escaped the attention of such Byzantine scholars as A. A. Vasiliev,<sup>6</sup> J. B. Bury,<sup>7</sup> S. Runciman,<sup>8</sup> and P. Charanis,<sup>9</sup> who have touched upon the problem of the appearance of the Gypsies in Byzantium. The most important of these flaws are: (1) the absence of Arabic influence on the dialects of the European Gypsies, which one would expect to find if De Goeje's theory were correct; (2) the almost conclusive evidence afforded by specialists that Jataki, the surviving vestige of the parent tongue of the Indian Jats, is wholly dissimilar from the language of the Gypsies. It is, therefore, with good reason that De Goeje's identification of Tabari's *Zott* with the Gypsies has been rejected in a most convincing manner by many orientalists, among them R. Pischell, who stated that "the information which De Goeje has given us from Arabic sources is the history not of the Gypsies, but of the Jats."<sup>10</sup>

The presence of a considerable number of Armenian words in all the dialects of the European Gypsies, would, as Miklosich's research has pointed out, lead to the conclusion that the Gypsies must have entered Byzantium from Armenia, where as the strong linguistic influence indicates, their sojourn cannot have been brief.<sup>11</sup> The Gypsies came to Armenia from Persia, where in all likelihood they had made their first appearance about the end of the ninth century.<sup>12</sup> At exactly what time and under what circumstances this migration to Armenian lands took place it is difficult to say, since we have no historical evidence, as far as I know, that could throw any light on this problem. Similarly, there is no historical evidence whatsoever as to why and when they left Armenia and entered the Byzantine Empire. However, since we have references to the presence of Gypsies in Constantinople in the middle of the eleventh century, it is tempting to surmise that the Seljuks, whose invasion of Armenia at that time caused the well-known dislocation of the Armenian people which finally brought about the foundation of Little Armenia in Cilicia, drove them into Byzantine territory.

The Anatolian routes, which the Gypsy invaders followed on their way to Constantinople and Thrace, whence they eventually spread throughout the Balkans and the whole of Europe, cannot be determined since they are not identified in the sources. It is clear, however, that the theory once proposed by A. Paspates, that the Gypsies came to Constantinople and Thrace by sea directly from the Trebizond region, must be rejected as founded on highly unconvincing linguistic evidence.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>6</sup> A. A. Vasiliev, *Vizantijska i Araby*, I (St. Petersburg, 1900), 177-8; *idem*, *Byzance et les Arabes*, I (Brussels, 1935), 223.

<sup>7</sup> J. B. Bury, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire* (London, 1912), 40, note 1; 276, note 1.

<sup>8</sup> S. Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee* (Cambridge, 1947), 183.

<sup>9</sup> P. Charanis, "Ethnic Changes in the Byzantine Empire in the Seventh Century," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 13 (1959), 27.

<sup>10</sup> R. Pischell, "The Home of the Gypsies," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, N.S., 2 (1908-9), 304; cf. J. Sampson, "On the Origin and Early Migrations of the Gypsies," *ibid.*, 3rd ser., 2 (1923), 157.

<sup>11</sup> Miklosich, *op. cit.*, III, 4; VI, 66-8; cf. Sampson, *loc. cit.*, 165 ff.

<sup>12</sup> See Sampson, *loc. cit.*, 158.

<sup>13</sup> A. Paspates, Περὶ μεταναστεύσεως τῶν Ἀσιγγκάνων, Ὁ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ἑλλήν. Θιολογ. Σύλλογος, 13 (1878-79), 35-9. Paspates' argument is based on his discovery of some doubtful affinities between the language of the Thracian Gypsies and the Greek dialect of Trebizond.

Our earliest reference to the presence of Gypsies in Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire in general comes from a Georgian hagiographical text—the *Life of Saint George the Athonite* (Giorgi Mt'ac'mideli, 1009–65) composed at the Monastery of Iberon on Mount Athos around 1068 by the Saint's faithful disciple George the Small (Giorgi Hucsesmonazoni).<sup>14</sup> We read in this text that in the year 1050 the Emperor Constantine Monomachus (1042–55) wished to exterminate the wild animals that had invaded the imperial park of Philopation in Constantinople and were devouring the game which the Emperor kept there for hunting purposes. To accomplish this, the Life informs us, he called upon "a Sarmatian people, descendants of Simon the Magician, named Adsincani, who were renowned sorcerers and villains" (*Erat nempe gens Samaritanorum, e stirpe Simonis magi, qui Adsincani vocitabantur, divinatione ac maleficiis famosi*). These Adsincani, the Life continues, succeeded in destroying many of the ferocious beasts simply by leaving in places frequented by them pieces of meat endowed with magical properties, which, when eaten, killed them instantly. This greatly impressed the Emperor, whose superstitious nature was typical of the mentality of eleventh-century Byzantines, and he asked the Adsincani to repeat their magic in his presence. Thus, a dog was brought forth and the Adsincani placed the charmed piece of meat before it. The Georgian Saint, who was also present, was displeased by this indulgence in superstition, and, moved by his faith in God, approached the piece of charmed meat and made the sign of the cross over it. The dog then ate the meat but, contrary to expectations, survived. The Adsincani were extremely disturbed, and the Emperor, impressed now by the miraculous intervention of St. George, declared that "as long as this holy man stands near me I shall not fear either the sorcerers or their deadly poisons."<sup>15</sup> An identical account, without, however, any mention of the name of the Adsincani, is given also by the *Chronicle of Iberia*, composed ca. 1072–3 and included in the famous *Georgian Annals* (*K'art'lis – Cxovreba*).<sup>16</sup> The Georgian chronicler must have drawn his information from the *Life of Saint George the Athonite*.

The name Adsincani which is used in the Georgian text to designate the Gypsies is undoubtedly the Georgian form of the Greek Ἀσιγγανοί or Ἀτζίγγανοί the term commonly used by the Byzantines for Gypsies. It is well established that the Turkish *Çingeneler* the Italian *Zingari*, the French *Tsiganes*, and the German *Zigeuner* also derived from this Byzantine name. The origin of Ἀσιγγανός has been the subject of long and controversial discussions among scholars, but none of the proposed theories seem, in my opinion, entirely convincing. Certain scholars, such as L. Wiener,<sup>17</sup> saw in its original form an Indian or Persian name which the Gypsies brought with them when they

<sup>14</sup> See M. Tarchnišvili, *Geschichte der kirchlichen georgischen Literatur* (Vatican City, 1955), 155, 181; D. M. Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints* (London, [1956]), 154.

<sup>15</sup> I have used the Latin translation of the Life by P. Peeters, "Histoires monastiques géorgiennes," *Analecta Bollandiana*, 36–37 (1917–9), 102–4.

<sup>16</sup> M. Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, I (St. Petersburg, 1849), 324. On the Chronicle of Iberia and its sources see C. Toumanoff, "Medieval Georgian Historical Literature," *Traditio*, 1 (1943), 173–4.

<sup>17</sup> L. Wiener, "Gypsies as Fortune-tellers and as Blacksmiths," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, N.S., 3 (1909), 16.

first entered Byzantium, and which was altered by the Byzantines to the most similar name with which they were familiar—that of the heretical sect of the Ἀθίγγανοι. Other scholars, such as Fr. Miklosich,<sup>18</sup> and De Goeje<sup>19</sup> expressed the theory that Ἀτσιγγανοί was simply a corrupt form of the heretical Ἀθίγγανοι, which, as we shall see later, was also applied to the Gypsies, most probably because both groups enjoyed a similar reputation for fortunetelling and skill in magic.<sup>20</sup> Both these views have been most ingeniously expounded, without, however, resolving some very serious problems. Concerning the first view, one must not overlook the fact that the name Ἀτσιγγανός is unknown to the Gypsies who call themselves *Rom*, or to the various peoples who harbored them before their appearance in Byzantium, where, according to historical evidence, the name is encountered for the first time. On the other hand, the change of θ to τσ does not, apparently, appear in the historical development of the Greek language, although a few extremely doubtful examples have occasionally been cited; thus the derivation of Ἀτσιγγανός from Ἀθίγγανός becomes highly improbable.<sup>21</sup> Recently S. A. Wolf<sup>22</sup> has proposed a new explanation, which is unacceptable simply because he derives the name Ἀτσιγγανός from the Turkish *egedenizi* (i.e. Aegean Sea; older form, *ak-denghiz*) without realizing that the Gypsies were called this, as we have noted in the *Life of Saint George the Athonite*, long before the appearance of the Turks on the Aegean coast. Unfortunately, the problem of the origin of the name Ἀτσιγγανός still awaits a convincing explanation from the philologists.

The next reference to Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire under the name of Athinganoi, comes from the twelfth century. The Canonist Theodore Balsamon (d. ca. 1204), commenting on canon LXI of the Council in Trullo (692), which threatened a six year excommunication for any member of the Church who deceived and exploited a naive public by displaying bears or other animals for amusement or by telling fortunes, wrote: "Those who lead around bears are called bearkeepers. They place dyed threads on the head and on the entire body of the animal. Then they would cut these threads and offer them along with parts of the animal's hair as amulets, and as cure from diseases and the evil eye. Others, who are called Athinganoi, would have snakes wound around them, and they would tell one person that he was born under an evil star, and the other under a lucky star; and they would also prophesy about forthcoming good and ill fortunes."<sup>23</sup> Balsamon refers to the same Athinganoi also in his commentary

<sup>18</sup> Miklosich, *op. cit.*, IV, 62.

<sup>19</sup> De Goeje, *op. cit.*, 74.

<sup>20</sup> J. Starr, "An Eastern Christian Sect: The Athinganoi," *Harvard Theological Review*, 29 (1936), 103. It is interesting to note here that in later copies (13th–15th cent.) of Byzantine texts referring to the heretical Athinganoi, we encounter the term Ἀτρίγγανοι instead of Ἀθίγγανοι, an apparent confusion as a result of the use, by that time, of both terms to designate the Gypsies. See marginal note on f. 27<sup>v</sup> of Cod. Parisinus gr. 2511; S. Lampros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos*, I (Cambridge, 1895), 338, no. 3655.

<sup>21</sup> See A. Mirambel, "Le group *ts* en grec moderne," *Bull. de la Soc. Lingu. de Paris*, 42 (1942–5), 89–102, and "L'opposition de *ts* et *dz* en grec moderne," *ibid.*, 46 (1950), 58–68.

<sup>22</sup> S. A. Wolf, "Völker- und geographische Namen im Romani (Zigeunersprache)," *Beiträge zur Namenforschung*, 9 (1958), 180–8.

<sup>23</sup> G. A. Rhalles and M. Potles, Σύνταγμα τῶν φείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων, II (Athens, 1852), 444–5; Migne, PG, CXXXVII, col. 720–1.

on Canon LXV of the Council in Trullo, where he refers among other things to ventriloquists. Defining and explaining the nature of ventriloquists he writes: "Ventriloquists and wizards are all those who are inspired satanically and pretend to predict the unknown as e.g. the *kritriai*, the Athinganoi, the false prophets, the 'hermits' and others."<sup>24</sup>

There is no doubt that Balsamon refers here to the Gypsies rather than to the heretical Athinganoi, as Ch. I. Myšcenko believed.<sup>25</sup> It is true that the heretical Athinganoi also had a reputation for fortunetelling and magical skills,<sup>26</sup> but it is impossible to think that Balsamon had these heretics in mind when the canon explicitly refers to members of the Church alone, both lay and clerical, who would be punished, respectively, with excommunication or removal from their office should they transgress the rules of the canon. Furthermore, there is no evidence whatsoever that the heretical Athinganoi survived the persecutions they suffered during the ninth century.<sup>27</sup>

In spite of all these stern measures taken by the Church to combat superstition, the Gypsies apparently continued to attract the credulous Byzantines. Thus in a circular letter the Patriarch of Constantinople Athanasius I (1289–93, 1303–9) wrote to all the clergy to admonish their flocks not to associate with fortunetellers, bearkeepers, and snake charmers, and "especially not to allow the Gypsies (Ἀθιγγάνους) to enter their homes, because they teach devilish things."<sup>28</sup> Some decades later the learned Joseph Bryennius (ca. 1340–ca. 1431) in an extremely informative treatise on the causes of the misfortunes that had befallen the Byzantine Empire, entitled *Τίνες αἰτίαι τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς λυπηρῶν*, lamented the fact that the people daily associated "with magicians, soothsayers, Gypsies (Ἀθιγγάνους) and charmers."<sup>29</sup> Similarly, we read the following passage in a fifteenth-century Byzantine nomocanon: "Those who consult the Gypsy women (Αἰγυπτίσσας) for fortunetelling, or those who bring a soothsayer to their homes to practice sorcery upon them—when they are ill or suffer from some other cause—should be forbidden to partake of Holy Communion for five years according to canon XXIV of the Council of Ancyra."<sup>30</sup>

One should not fail to note here that the name Αἰγυπτίσσας is used to

<sup>24</sup> Rhallès and Potlès, *op. cit.*, II, 458; Migne, PG., CXXXVII, col. 720ff., 741. On the ventriloquists, *kritriai*, and "hermits," see L. Oeconomus, *La vie religieuse dans l'Empire byzantin au temps des Comnènes et des Anges* (Paris, 1918), 224, note 3; and Ph. Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν Βίος καὶ πολιτισμός*, I, pt. 2 (Athens, 1948), 137, note 1; 139; 160, note 6.

<sup>25</sup> Ch. I. Myšcenko, "Ἀθιγγανοὶ ne Cyhany," *Zbirnyk na pošanu akad. D. I. Bahalijsa* (Kiev, 1927), 183 ff.

<sup>26</sup> See Starr, *loc. cit.*, 98 and 103.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>28</sup> Vat. gr. 2219, f. 120<sup>r</sup>; cf. a similar text also in ff. 225<sup>v</sup>–226<sup>r</sup>. I am indebted for this reference to Professor J. Meyendorff.

<sup>29</sup> The complete text of this treatise accompanied by a French translation can be conveniently consulted in L. Oeconomus, "L'état intellectuel et moral des Byzantins vers le milieu de XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle d'après une page de Joseph Bryennios," *Mélanges Charles Diehl*, I (Paris, 1930), 225 ff. Cf. N. Tomadakes, 'Ο Ἰωσήφ Βρυέννιος καὶ ἡ Κρήνη κατὰ τὸ 1400 (Athens, 1947), 118; Koukoules, *op. cit.*, I, pt. 2, 130.

<sup>30</sup> A. Pavlov, *Nomokanon pri bol'som Trebnikē* (2nd ed., Moscow, 1897), 132. A similar text appears also in a seventeenth-century manuscript of a later nomocanon mentioned by Koukoules, *op. cit.*, VI, 182, note 3. The twenty-fourth canon of the Council of Ancyra forbids members of the clergy to consult soothsayers. See Rhallès and Potlès, *op. cit.*, III, 66 ff.

designate the Gypsy women engaged in fortunetelling. This identification is conclusively proved by the Slavic translation of this nomocanon, which under the name *Nomokanon pri bol'shom Trebnikē* has enjoyed great popularity in Russia, where the word Αἰγυπτίσσης is translated by *ciganki* (цигánки). It is interesting, too, that the Byzantines' use of the term for the Egyptians (Αἰγύπτιοι)—from which the modern Greek name for the Gypsies Γύφτοι derives<sup>31</sup>—to designate the Gypsies clearly indicates that the legend of their Egyptian origin was already known in Byzantium and did not originate later in Europe, as is often believed.

I am tempted to think that it is to the Gypsies also that Nicephorus Gregoras refers when he speaks of the group of Egyptian acrobats that appeared in Constantinople during the reign of Andronicus II (1282–1328). Gregoras' passage reads:

"During this time [i.e. the first decades of the fourteenth century] we saw in Constantinople a transient group of people—not less than twenty in number—versed in certain acts of jugglery. None of the older generation had ever heard or seen them. They came originally from Egypt, but then, as if following a circular route from east to north, they wandered through Chaldaea, Arabia, Persia, Media, and Assyria. Then turning west they passed through Iberia in the Caucasus, Colchis, and Armenia and from there through the lands of all the tribes which inhabit the intervening territory up to Byzantium; and in every country and city [they visited] they gave performances of their art. And the arts they performed were stupendous and full of wonder; they had, however, nothing to do with magic, but were the products of an adroit nature, trained for a long time in the practice of such works. The following are some examples, to speak briefly of a few of their many acts:

They placed two or three ship masts in an erect position on the ground, supported on both sides by cords, so that they would not lean toward either side. Then they stretched a rope from the top of one mast to the other. They also wound around the masts another rope from the bottom to the top to form spiral steps for their ascents. One of them, having climbed up these steps, performed a headstand on the level top of the mast, placing his head on the top of the mast and stretching his feet toward the sky, now holding them apart, now bringing them together. Then by making a sudden jump he would firmly grasp the rope with one hand and remain suspended, and from this position he would revolve and whirl around many times, turning his legs quickly and continuously up toward the sky and down toward the ground like a wheel. Then, in place of his hand, he would grasp the rope with the calf [of his leg] and would hang head down. And again he would revolve and whirl around in the same manner. Then he would stand erect at the center of the rope and take a bow and some arrows and shoot at a distant target, and from this position he would shoot with the greatest accuracy, as no other man could do even when standing on the

<sup>31</sup> See D. Georgakas, "Über das Ethnikon Γύφτος," *Glotta*, 29 (1942), 156–61. C. Bires (Οἱ Γύφτοι [Athens, 1942] and Ρῶμ καὶ Γύφτοι [Athens, 1954]) unsuccessfully attempts to distinguish the Γύφτοι from the Ἀτσιγγανοί, to make them two different peoples.

ground. Then with closed eyes and with a child on his shoulders he would walk in the air on the rope from one mast to the other. And this is what one of them was doing.

Another mounted a horse and whipped it to a trot; and while the horse was running stood erect now on the saddle, now on the horse's mane, and now on the rump, and shifted his feet continuously, as if he were flying like a bird. Then he would alight while the horse was running, grasp its tail and, after a jump, would be seen seated again on the saddle. From this position he would ease himself over toward one side of the saddle, turn around under the horse's belly, come up from the other side and be seated again. And while he occupied himself with these tricks he did not neglect to whip the horse to a trot. These were the tricks performed by this particular acrobat.

Still another placed on the top of his head a stick, one cubit long, and [balanced] a jar full of liquid on the top of the stick. He walked around for a long time and kept it balanced. Another, also, put on the top of his head a lance, not less than three fathoms long, around which a rope was wound so as to form steps. A boy would cling to these with his hands and feet and, by continuously shifting them, climb to the top of the lance and down again. And the man who held the lance on the top of his head walked around continuously.

Another one had a glass ball which he threw up high, and when it came down he would catch it, now on his finger tip, now on his elbow, now on something else and again on something else.

I shall not describe the various kinds of dances and the other tricks they performed for us. Every one of them knew not one trick, but all of them. And they knew not only those they performed, but also innumerable others. Since these tricks were dangerous, they did not live in safety; often some would fall and be killed; for they numbered more than forty when they left their homeland, but hardly twenty survived when they reached Byzantium. We ourselves have seen one fall from the mast and be killed. Having collected much money from the spectators, they wandered all over the world, both for profit and to display their own art. Moving from Byzantium, they travelled through Thrace and Macedonia and went as far as Gadeira [i.e. Gades in Spain], and they made almost the whole world a theater for their art."<sup>32</sup>

Since we know from literary evidence that acrobats were familiar figures in Byzantium from a very early period,<sup>33</sup> one may wonder whether, although the Byzantines often referred to Gypsies as Egyptians (Αἰγύπτιοι), Gregoras' Egyptian acrobats could not have been a group merely hailing from Egypt.

A simple comparison, however, of Gregoras' account with the description of the Gypsies of Egypt and Syria in a contemporary Arabic source supports the theory that Gregoras most probably refers to the Gypsies. The Arabic source in question is the so-called *Journeys of the Eyes in the Kingdoms of the Various Countries* (*Mesalek Alabsar fi memalek alamsar*) by Sihabeddin (al-Umari)

<sup>32</sup> Gregoras, Bonn ed., I, 348–51.

<sup>33</sup> On acrobats in Byzantium see J. H. Krause, *Die Byzantiner des Mittelalters in ihrem Staats-, Hof- und Privatleben* (Halle, 1869), 86–7; K. Dieterich, *Byzantinische Quellen zur Länder- und Völkerkunde*, II (Leipzig, 1912), 159–60; Koukoules, *op. cit.*, III, 256ff.

Abdul Abbas Ahmed (d. 1341), a high official in the Mameluk chancery, who composed this extremely informative work as a kind of handbook for government officials and especially for those of the chancery. Al-Umari also speaks, among other things, of the Gypsies, whom he calls *Lors*.<sup>34</sup> The passage reads as follows in a French translation by E. Quatremère:

“On voit en Égypte et en Syrie plusieurs tribus de Lors; mais le plus grand nombre habite cette dernière province. Ils y jouissent d’une grande célébrité et se sont distingués par des faits très-remarquables. . . . Le Lor marche sur des cordes tendues à plusieurs toises du sol; il se renverse dans l’air, de manière que la tête pend vers la terre, tandis que les pieds sont attachés à la corde; ensuite il se relève tout droit; puis il marche sur la corde avec des semelles de bois, et exécute des tours d’agilité si prodigieux, que tous les assistans demeurent stupéfaits. Les femmes ne sont pas, dans ces exercices, moins habiles que les hommes; elles montent à cheval et le font galopper à bride abattue. Au plus fort de la course, elles se précipitent vers la terre, puis sautent sur l’animal, se placent en travers sur son dos, puis s’attachent sous son ventre en guise de ceinture; enfin elles quittent le dos du cheval et lui embrassent le cou, tantôt dans la partie supérieure, tantôt vers la poitrine. Elles exécutent ainsi une infinité d’évolutions prodigieuses et de tours d’agilité admirables.”<sup>35</sup>

The similarity between these two contemporary texts is so striking that it cannot be merely accidental. Al-Umari’s evidence, which refers explicitly to the Gypsies of Egypt and Syria, strongly suggests, in my opinion, that Gregoras’ Egyptian acrobats, too, were most probably Gypsies. Furthermore one should recall in this connection that, as has been pointed out above, the practice of referring in Byzantine sources to the Gypsies as Egyptians was well established by this time.

Three other anonymous Byzantine texts, quite possibly of the fourteenth century, provide us with some additional information about the life and occupations of the Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire. All three are long compositions in verse written in the popular idiom most probably in Constantinople. References to the Gypsies in works of such popular appeal and wide circulation suggest that the great mass of the Greek-speaking world was, by then entirely familiar with the Gypsies and their occupations.

In the first poem, entitled *Philosophy of a Drunkard* (Φιλοσοφία κρασοπατέρα or Φυσιολογική διήγησις τοῦ ὑπερτίμου κρασοπατέρος Πέτρου τοῦ Ζυφομούστου), we find a reference to a drunkard who, upon waking in the morning, finds himself dissatisfied with everything in life, and among the various people with whom he finds fault is the “dark Gypsy” who, gaping, remembers his sieve (ὁ δὲ μαυροκατζίβελος τὸ γυροκόσκινόν του [χάσκοντας ἐνθυμᾶται]).<sup>36</sup> This reference

<sup>34</sup> Al-Umari’s *Lors* have been convincingly identified as Gypsies by De Goeje, *op. cit.*, 63, and V. Minorsky, “Les Tsiganes Lūli et les Lurs persans,” *Journal asiatique*, 218 (1931), 290.

<sup>35</sup> E. Quatremère, “Notice de l’ouvrage qui a pour titre: Mesalek Alabsar fi memalek alamsar; Voyages des yeux dans les royaumes des différentes contrées,” *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi*, 13 (1838), 330–2; cf. C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, II (Leiden, 1949), 177–8; and Supplementband, II. (Leiden, 1938), 175–6.

<sup>36</sup> Sp. Lampros, Φυσιολογική διήγησις τοῦ ὑπερτίμου κρασοπατέρος Πέτρου τοῦ Ζυφομούστου, Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων, 1 (1904), 442. The dating of the composition of this poem, and also of the other two

clearly indicates that the Gypsies in Byzantium were also known as sieve-makers, an art which they have kept alive to modern times. It should be noted that the name used in this poem to designate the Gypsy is neither Ἀθίγγανος or Αἰγύπτιος but Κατζίβελος. This Byzantine name, the origin of which remains obscure, has been preserved in modern Greek to this day, and is now spelled either Κατσιβελος or Κατζίβελος.<sup>37</sup> That in the poem mentioned above Κατζίβελος means Gypsy can be illustrated by the fact that in one of the four existing manuscripts of the *Philosophy of a Drunkard* the verse in question uses Αἰγυπτίος instead of Κατζίβελος,<sup>38</sup> and, furthermore, the sixteenth-century chronicler Manuel Malaxos explicitly identifies the two names.<sup>39</sup>

From the second poem, *A Jocular Tale About the Quadrupeds* (Παιδιόφραστος διήγησις τῶν τετραπόδων ζώων), a satire on the animal world, we learn once more that among the Byzantines who greatly enjoyed amusements in which bears played a part the Gypsies were known as bearkeepers.<sup>40</sup> In this satirical poem the wolf, having become engaged in an argument with the bear, scornfully calls him "reservoir of filth, an amusement of the foolish Gypsies." In another part of the poem the name Gypsy is also mentioned simply as an insult, when the hare accuses the fox of being "a liar, a thief, and a Gypsy."<sup>41</sup> The word Gypsy has a derogatory meaning also in our third poem, the "Book of the Birds" (Ὁ Πουλολόγος), where the seagull and the goose are arguing, and the latter calls the former all sorts of insulting names, among them Gypsy.<sup>42</sup>

The last two references seem to me of particular value because they so clearly illustrate the contemptuous attitude of the Byzantines toward the Gypsies, an attitude still held by many people who, against their will, have harbored Gypsies among themselves.

Lack of literary evidence prevents our forming an opinion as to the exact

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mentioned thereafter, has been a controversial problem. It is now agreed, however, that in their present form they all belong most probably to the fourteenth century (K. Krumbacher, *Gesch. der byz. Literatur* [2nd ed., Munich, 1897], 879–80; Lampros, *loc. cit.*, 440–1). But several scholars have argued that the original form was composed in the twelfth century (E. Legrand, *Recueil des chansons populaires grecques* [Paris, 1874], XVII; S. Papadimitriou, *Fedor Prodrom; istoriko-literaturnoe izslédovanie* [Odessa, 1905], 398–9).

<sup>37</sup> See A. Paspatis (Paspates), *Études sur les Tchinghianianés ou Bohémiens de l'Empire ottoman* (Constantinople, 1870), 19. Paspates discusses also the etymology of this word, but no satisfactory explanation has been produced so far. See also P. Bataillard, *État de la question de l'ancienneté des Tsiganes en Europe* (Paris, 1877), 22–4.

<sup>38</sup> Lampros, *loc. cit.*, 439: καὶ ὁ ταπεινὸς ὁ Αἰγυπτίος τὰ παλαιοκοσκινὰ του.

<sup>39</sup> F. H. Marshal, "The Chronicle of M. Malaxos," *Byz.-neugr. Jahrbücher*, 5 (1926), 13: καὶ κάθονται εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν πρώην ναὸν [i.e. the Church of the Blachernae] Αἰγύπτιοι, τοῦτέστι Κατζίβελοι. The same identification is also made by the sixteenth-century Patriarch of Alexandria Meletios Pegas. See A. Nikolakes, *Μελέτιος ὁ Πηγᾶς ὁ Κρής, Πατριάρχης Ἀλεξανδρείας* (Chania, 1903), 196. The appellation Κατζίβελοι applied to the Gypsies in Thessaly occurs also in another sixteenth-century source, the Chronicle of Meteora (See L. Heuzey and H. Daumet, *Mission archéologique de Macédoine* [Paris, 1876], 445).

<sup>40</sup> See Koukoules, *op. cit.*, III, 248 ff.

<sup>41</sup> W. Wagner, *Carmina graeca medii aevi* (Leipzig, 1874), p. 170, line 846: κορμοφκάρα, παίγνιον τῶν μωροατζίγγάνων; p. 151, line 285: ἀλλ' εἶσαι ψεματάρισσα, κλέπτρια καὶ τζιγκάνα. On the emendation of κορμοφκάρα to βρωμοθηκάρα see V. S. Šandrovskaja, "Vizantijskaja basnja 'Rasskaz o četveronogih' (XIV v.)," *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, 9 (1956), 247.

<sup>42</sup> S. Krawczynski, *Ὁ Πουλολόγος* (Berlin, 1960), 58, line 127: ἀτζίγγανε, μαυρότεχνε, ἐμὲν τὰ συντυχαίνεις; cf. *ibid.*, 106, line 428, where the turtle-dove contemptuously calls the crow Gypsy: Αἰγύπτισσα μὲ τὸ μανδῖν, γυλοῦ μὲ τὸ καρκάλιν.

length of the period during which the migration of the Gypsies from Thrace into the Greek mainland and the Northern Balkans took place. The earliest references we have to Gypsies in these territories come from the fourteenth century, and do not give any clue as to the date of their arrival there. This normally nomadic people could hardly have been described as sedentary in the second half of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century in the Peloponnese, the western part of the Greek mainland, and the Ionian islands if they had not been there for a considerable period of time.

In the *Sojourn of Mazaris in Hades* (Ἐπιδημία Μάλαρι ἐν Ἅιδου), an imaginary letter, dated September 21, 1415, addressed from the Peloponnese to one Holo-bolos, of the Underworld, describes the conditions that existed in the peninsula.

"In the Peloponnese, as you know yourself, O my friend," Mazaris writes, "live pell-mell numerous nations, of which it is not easy nor very necessary to retrace the boundaries, but every ear can easily distinguish them by their language, and here are the most notable of them: Lacedaemonians, Italians, Peloponnesians, Slavs, Illyrians, Egyptians, and Jews (and among them are not a few half-castes) in all seven [principal] nations."<sup>43</sup> Mazaris' Egyptians are undoubtedly the Gypsies, because, as we shall see immediately below, other contemporary sources testify to the presence of Gypsies in the Peloponnese at that time. On the basis of Mazaris' account that the Gypsies were one of the principal nations living in the Peloponnese at that time and that they still spoke their own language, one may conclude that their number in the peninsula was considerable.

The Gypsies must have invaded the Peloponnese originally as nomads, but they appear in our sources to have been well settled by the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries, especially in the territories held by Venice. Their reasons for preferring to settle in Venetian lands must undoubtedly have been the fact that the Venetian colonies enjoyed relative stability and security, while the rest of the Peloponnese suffered greatly from constant Turkish invasions.

From a Venetian document, dated August 12, 1444, we learn that the Gypsies were well established in the area of the Venetian town of Nauplion (Napoli di Romania). This document, which is in the Archivio di Stato in Venice, was known to C. Hopf,<sup>44</sup> who mentioned it briefly, but it has never been published, nor has its entire content ever been properly discussed.<sup>45</sup> It is a decision of the Council of the Forty concerning the reinstatement of John the

<sup>43</sup> A. Ellissen, *Analekten der mittel- und neugriechischen Litteratur*, IV (Leipzig, 1860), 239. Cf. D. Zakythinos, *Le despotat grec de Morée*, II (Athens, 1953), 44. Based solely on Mazaris' account, F. W. Brepohl ("Die Zigeuner im Byzantinischen Reich," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, 20 [1912], 7-14) arrived at the unsubstantiated conclusion that the Gypsies must have acquired from the Byzantines all the bad qualities we observe in their character today. Cf. the severe criticism of Brepohl's views by A. Heisenberg in *Byz. Zeit.*, 20 (1911), 594-5.

<sup>44</sup> C. Hopf, *Geschichte Griechenlands vom Beginn des Mittelalters bis auf unsere Zeit*, II (in Ersch and Gruber, *Allg. Encyclopädie d. Wissensch. u. Künste*, LXXXVI [Leipzig, 1868]), 113; and *Die Einwanderung der Zigeuner in Europa* (Gotta, 1870), 11.

<sup>45</sup> I am indebted to Mr. C. Mergios of Venice for locating this document in the Archivio di Stato (Avogaria di Comun, Numero Generale 3649, Raspe 1442-1458), and also to the authorities of the Archivio for sending me a photograph of it and for granting me permission to publish it.

Gypsy (*Johannes cinganus*) as *drungarius acinganorum*. John had been removed from this office by the Venetian governor of Nauplion, Matteo Barbaro.<sup>46</sup> The act of the governor is condemned by the Council of the Forty as "contrary to what could and should be done and contrary to the privileges granted to the predecessors and progenitors of the said John both by our government and by the nobleman Ottaviano Bono,<sup>47</sup> the predecessor of the said Matteo Barbaro, [and as such] it should be made invalid and void and it should be revoked and annulled with all its results and consequences, so that it would have no efficacy or force, as if it had never taken place." The Council further voted "to reinstate the said John in his said office as he was before, and under the same terms of law, rank, title, and position as before the said deprivation took place, when the said Matteo was ordered not to leave Venice without revoking the dismissal concerning this affair and he refused to obey."<sup>48</sup>

From a careful examination of this document one may conclude that the Gypsies of the Nauplion region were, at least from the end of the fourteenth century, an organized group under a military leader, who at the time of the above document bore the Christian name of John and the purely Byzantine title of *drungarius*.<sup>49</sup> One must regret, however, the absence of specific reference to the nature of the privileges the Venetians had granted to John's ancestors, for this is, as far as I know, the first record of any privileges having been granted to Gypsies. Although we do not possess explicit information as to why the Venetians extended these privileges to the Gypsies, it is possible that they were prompted to do so because of the difficulty of their position in the Peloponnese which was at that time subject to constant Turkish razzias and attacks by the Greek despots.<sup>50</sup> It stands to reason, then, that the Venetians may have granted certain rights to the Gypsies with the expectation of receiving, in return, military assistance from the *drungarius acinganorum* and his men, in the event of enemy attack. Furthermore, the Venetians may have decided, too, that such a step would induce the newly arrived Gypsies to undertake the cultivation of the land in the Nauplion area, which was depopulated as a result of the frequent Turkish inroads; indeed, an exactly parallel program had been carried out with the Albanians who had been installed in the Nauplion-Argos area at the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> According to C. Hopf (*Chroniques greco-romanes* [Berlin, 1873], 383), Matteo Barbaro was governor of Nauplion in 1438.

<sup>47</sup> Ottaviano Bono appears in Hopf's list of the Venetian governors of Nauplion (*op. cit.*, 383) as occupying that office in 1397 and 1403. We find him mentioned also, however, as *potestas et capitaneus Neapolis Romaniae* in a Venetian document dated December 31, 1404 (C. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au Moyen âge*, II [Paris, 1881], 123-4; cf. *ibid.*, III, 443-4).

<sup>48</sup> Appendix, document no. 1.

<sup>49</sup> According to Pseudo-Codinus (Bonn ed., pp. 12, 43) the *drungarius* (δρουγγάριος), who occupied the 76th rank in the Byzantine hierarchy, was the commander of a *drunga* (δρουγγα), a group of soldiers. Cf. R. Guiland, "Études de titulature et de prosopographie byzantines, Les chefs de la marine byzantine: Drongaire de la flotte, Grand Drongaire de la flotte, Duc de la flotte, Mégaduc," *Byz. Zeit.*, 44 (1951), 219.

<sup>50</sup> Several Venetian documents testify to the difficult situation of the Venetians in Nauplion. See Sathas, *op. cit.*, II, 259; III, 207-8, and F. Thiriet, *Régestes des délibérations du Sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie*, I (Paris, 1958), 219; II (Paris, 1959), 180. Cf. D. Zakythinos, *op. cit.*, I (Paris, 1932), 132 ff.

<sup>51</sup> See a Venetian document of September 7, 1398, in Thiriet, *op. cit.*, I, 221.

A considerable Gypsy settlement existed also in another Venetian colony on the western coast of the Peloponnese, at Modon. The town of Modon (Methone), which has a good natural harbor, lay conveniently halfway between Venice and Jaffa, and was a welcome stopping-place for all pilgrims who journeyed by this most popular route to the Holy Land. Several of the diaries of pilgrims who travelled by way of Modon mention explicitly the Gypsy quarters which their writers saw there.

Lionardo di Niccolò Frescobaldi, who visited Modon in 1384, reports that he saw a number of *Romniti* outside the walls of the city, whom he thought to be penitents doing penance for their sins.<sup>52</sup> The testimony of subsequent travellers, as L. Wiener<sup>53</sup> and E. O. Winstedt<sup>54</sup> have observed, conclusively proves that they were Gypsies. Almost a century later Bernhard von Breydenbach (1483) mentions in his itinerary that "there are many hovels outside the town, about three hundred in number, in which dwell certain poor folk like the Ethiopians, black and ungainly," and he adds that they were called Saracens in Germany, and that they falsely claimed to have come from Egypt. In reality they were natives of Gyppe, near Modon, and were spies and traitors.<sup>55</sup> Breydenbach had had the felicitous idea of taking with him as travelling companion the artist Eberhard Reüwich, whose drawings of some of the places they visited were reproduced in Breydenbach's book. Among these there is one of Modon in which the Gypsy hovels outside the wall of the city, which are described in the text, can be seen. The number of Gypsy huts in Modon given by Breydenbach is also mentioned by Konrad Grünemberg (1486),<sup>56</sup> but Alexander Pflazgraf bei Rhein (1495)<sup>57</sup> speaks of only 200 houses, while Arnold von Harff (1497) reduces them to one hundred,<sup>58</sup> and about twenty years later Ludwig Tschudi (1519) found only thirty Gypsy huts there.<sup>59</sup>

The decline of the Gypsies' colony at Modon must be explained mainly by their gradual but steady departure undertaken because of the Turkish advances, which culminated in the capture of Modon itself in 1500. These events had greatly decreased both commercial activity and the pilgrim traffic, and finally the very stability and security that the Venetians had provided in the past ceased to exist. Of the various occupations practiced by the Gypsies in Modon the most common, according to the travellers' accounts, was that of the blacksmith. Fassbender writes that "they live in great poverty, and practice nothing but smithcraft, which they perform in a strange manner of their own."<sup>60</sup> Both Dietrich von Schachten and Arnold von Harff, who give lengthy descriptions

<sup>52</sup> *Viaggio di Lionardo di Niccolò Frescobaldi in Egitto, e in Terra Santa* (Rome, 1818), 72-3.

<sup>53</sup> Wiener, *loc. cit.*, 5.

<sup>54</sup> E. O. Winstedt, "The Gypsies of Modon and the 'Wyne of Romeney'," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, N.S., 3 (1909-10), 57-69.

<sup>55</sup> Bernhard von Breydenbach, *Peregrinationes in Terram Sanctam* (Mainz, 1486), f. 18<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> Konrad Grünemberg's unpublished journal, as quoted by Winstedt, *loc. cit.*, 67.

<sup>57</sup> In S. Feyrabend, *Reyssbuch des Heyligen Lands* (Frankfurt, 1584), 37.

<sup>58</sup> *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff*, tr. by Malcolm Letts (London, 1946), 83.

<sup>59</sup> *Reysz und Bilgefahrt zum Heyligen Grab desz Edlen und Bestrengen Herren Ludwigen Tschudis* (S. Gallen, 1606), 68.

<sup>60</sup> R. Röhricht and H. Meisner, *Deutsche Pilgerreisen nach dem Heiligen Lande* (Berlin, 1880), 251.

of the Gypsy colony in Modon, also speak of them mainly as smiths. Dietrich von Schachten, who visited Modon in 1491, writes: "Item; at Modon outside the city on the hill by the wall there are many miserable little huts, where the Gypsies, so-called in Germany, dwell; very poor people and generally all smiths. They sit on the ground for their work and have a pit made in the earth in which they keep the fire and if the men or women have a pair of bellows in their hands, they are quite content, and blow with the bellows, a miserably poor thing that is beyond description, and make a great number of nails and very well."<sup>61</sup> Harff's account which is the fullest reads as follows:

"Item; we proceeded through the suburb, which is inhabited by many poor black naked people who live in little houses roofed with reeds, some three hundred families. They are called Gypsies: we call them heathen people from Egypt who travel about in our countries. These people follow all kinds of trade, such as shoemaking, cobbling and smithery. It was strange to see the anvil on the ground at which a man sat like a tailor in our country. By him, also on the ground, sat his housewife spinning, so that the fire was between them. Beside them were two small leather sacks like a bagpipe half buried in the ground by the fire. As the woman sat spinning she raised one of the sacks from the ground from time to time and pressed it down again. This forced wind through the earth into the fire so that the smith could work. Item; these people come from a country called Gyppe, which lies about forty miles from the town of Modon. The Turkish Emperor took it sixty years ago, but many lords and counts would not serve under the Turkish Emperor and fled to our country, to Rome, to our Holy Father the Pope, seeking comfort and support from him. At their request he sent letters of recommendation to the Roman Emperor and to all princes of the Empire that they should give them safe conduct and support, since they were driven out for the Christian faith. He sent these letters to all princes, but none gave them help. They died in misery, bequeathing the letters to their servants and children, who to this day wander about the country calling themselves Little Egyptians. But this is untrue, since their parents were born in the land of Gyppe, called Tzingania, which place is not half way from here, Cologne, to Egypt. For which reason they have become vagabonds and spy out the land."<sup>62</sup>

A word should be said here about the names Gyppe and Little Egypt, mentioned by Harff, as well as in the accounts of many other travellers. The origin of these names has been sought far and wide, but, as E. O. Winstedt has very rightly observed, there seems no reasonable doubt "that the two names were temporarily applied to the camping-place of the colony of Gypsies behind Modon." Commenting on the various theories expressed about the origin of the name Little Egypt, which was claimed by some of the early fifteenth-century Gypsy invaders of Western Europe as their original habitat, Winstedt added: "The name Little Egypt is sufficiently paralleled by the 'Little Jewry' of some English towns; and the mistake of those who have sought for it elsewhere has

<sup>61</sup> Röhricht and Meisner, *op. cit.*, 180.

<sup>62</sup> *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff*, 82-4.

lain in supposing that it contained the clue to the legend of Egyptian origin, whereas the name was merely derived from the legend.”<sup>63</sup>

Before leaving the Peloponnese, I wish to comment upon the theory of Sp. Lampros that the Peloponnesian *Zygiotai* (Ζυγιῶται), mentioned in the itinerary of the fifteenth-century Byzantine traveller Cananus Lascaris (fl. 1412), were Gypsies. Cananus Lascaris writes that “after this city [i.e., Danzig] there is the province of Slavonia, which has Lübeck as its most important city. And the *Zygiotai* of the Peloponnese come from this province, since there are there many villages which converse in the language of the *Zygiotai*.”<sup>64</sup> Lampros’ view that the *Zygiotai* were simply the Peloponnesian Gypsies has been rejected with good reason by N. G. Polites, V. Lundström, A. A. Vasiliev, M. Vasmer, D. Zakythinos, and S. Kougeas, who have convincingly identified the *Zygiotai* with the remnants of the Slav settlers in the Peloponnese.<sup>65</sup>

From the Venetian territories in the Peloponnese the Gypsies seem to have passed, as a result of the Turkish advances, to the neighboring Ionian islands, which were at that time also under Venetian rule. Thus, at the beginning of the sixteenth century we find on the island of Zante Gypsy smiths whose working methods, similiar to those of the Modon Gypsy smiths, suggest direct migration from the Peloponnese. The description of the Modon Gypsy smiths by Harff, which I have quoted earlier, presents striking similarities to the following account by Jacques le Saige, who visited Zante in 1518:

“Dont vismes oprime merveille, car les forgeux de cloux et de fer de chevaux sont forgeans emmy les rues, et sont assis sur la terre, comme une cousturier est en nostre país; ont lesdits forgeux une petite pierre de quoy ils mont du carbon contre, et font la du feu. Ladite pierre a environ deux pied de loing et une pied de hault. C’est leur contrecœur elle est trauée au milieu, et ont une petite buise de fer et deux peaux de cuir liée a ladite buise sans estre couzue a ladite peau, dont il y a quelque valton ou bacelette quitiennent les dites peaux par le boul et les haulcent et abaissent et du vent font ardoir le dit carbon, qui est le plus estraingue chose a regarder que ne sçaroit escripte. Car ils sont tant de ce mestier et si dru que il samble que on soit e faire.”<sup>66</sup>

The most complete account, however, of a Gypsy settlement in those Byzantine lands that fell in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries into Venetian hands concerns the island of Corfu. The beginnings of the Gypsy settlement on this island are very obscure. In the sources the Gypsies appear for the first time in Corfu under the Angevins in the second half of the fourteenth century. By that time their number on the island must have been

<sup>63</sup> Winstedt, *loc. cit.*, 61.

<sup>64</sup> S. Lampros, Κανανὸς Λάσκαρις καὶ Βασίλειος Βατάτζης, δύο Ἑλληνας περιηγηταὶ τοῦ ΙΕ' καὶ ΙΗ' αἰῶνος, Παρνασσός, 5 (1881), 705 ff. (reprinted with additions in his Μικταὶ σελίδες [Athens, 1905], 579 ff.).

<sup>65</sup> N. G. Polites, Οἱ Ζυγιῶται τῆς Πελοποννήσου in his Λαογραφικὰ σύμμεικτα, I (Athens, 1920), 136; V. Lundström, *Laskaris Kananos' Reseanteckningar från de nordiska länderna* (Upsala, 1902), 29; A. A. Vasiliev, “Laskar’ Kanan, vizantijskij putešestvennik XV v. po Sēvernoj Evropě i v Islandiju,” *Sbornik Char'kovskago Istor.-filol. Ob-va v čest' prof. V. P. Buzeskula* (Kharkov, 1914), 397 ff.; M. Vasmer, *Die Slaven in Griechenland* (Berlin, 1942), 18–9; D. Zakythinos, Οἱ Σλάβοι ἐν Ἑλλάδι (Athens, 1945), 65; S. Kougeas, Περὶ τῶν Μελιγκῶν τοῦ Ταῦγέτου (Athens, 1950), 8.

<sup>66</sup> H. R. Duthilloeul, *Voyage de Jacques le Saige* (Donai, 1851), 74.

considerable, a conclusion drawn from the fact that the annual dues of the Corfiot Gypsies were sufficient to form an independent fief, the *feudum acingannorum*, the history of which can be adequately traced to its very end in the nineteenth century, thanks to the survival of a number of important documents. According to this documentary evidence, a certain Aloysius de Citro is mentioned as the first baron of the fief. He was followed by Adamo di Sant' Ippolito, known also from a document issued in 1381 by Jacques de Baux, the Angevin titular emperor of Constantinople and prince of Achaia, who ruled in Corfu for a short period. This document informs us that Adamo di Sant' Ippolito had been granted the fief of the island of Paxos in 1381.<sup>67</sup> Adamo di Sant' Ippolito's successor, Giannello de Abitabulo (Ioannelus de Habitabulo) combined the fief of the Gypsies with his own, which henceforth became known as the *Feudo di Giannello Habitabuli e Acingani*. After Giannello's death the fief passed to Jacobo Dondi, who acquired it on lease from the Venetians for two years. This clearly indicates that the fief until that time was not granted on a hereditary basis, and that it became hereditary only with Dondi's successor, Michael de Hugot (or Goth). The fief was granted to the latter as hereditary by the Venetians in recognition of the services he had rendered to the Republic, and to win his support and allegiance, since he was the scion of a wealthy and powerful Corfiote family. Michael de Hugot assumed his duties as baron of the fief, however, only in March of 1470. He was succeeded by his son Alexander, and when the latter's son and successor, Victor, died childless the fief reverted to the Venetians. In 1540 the Venetian Republic granted the fief to the Corfiote scholar and soldier Antonius Eparchus—on the condition that he teach Greek in Venice—as compensation for the services he had rendered and the losses he had suffered during the Turkish siege of Corfu two years earlier.

From the Eparchus family the fief of the Gypsies passed in hereditary succession to the families of Morello, Quartano, and Prosalendi, the latter having its control from 1692 to the nineteenth century, when it ceased to exist as a result of the abolition of feudalism in Corfu. This brief account of the barons of the fief of the Gypsies of Corfu is based on information provided by J. Romanos, who studied carefully the various documents concerning the fief, which were then in possession of the Prosalendi family.<sup>68</sup> The oldest and most important of these documents, which have been published by S. Lampros, but never studied thoroughly, is an official decree in Latin issued by Thomas Memo, the Venetian *Bailus ac Capitaneus Civitatis ac Insulae Corphorum Universis*, and dated March 24, 1470, conferring the fief of the Gypsies to Michael de Hugot and his heirs.<sup>69</sup>

Besides informing us of the names of the successive barons of the fief, this document gives us a fairly good idea of the obligations of both the baron toward

<sup>67</sup> [Archduke Ludwig Salvator], *Paxos und Antipaxos* (Prague, 1887), 9 ff.

<sup>68</sup> In S. Lampros, *Κερκυραϊκά ανέκδοτα* (Athens, 1882), 67.

<sup>69</sup> Lampros, *op. cit.*, 67–70. This document is reproduced from the Lampros edition in the Appendix, document no. 2.

the Venetians and the Gypsy serfs toward their feudal lord. The baron of the fief seems to have had wide jurisdiction over his subjects, among whom were counted not only the Gypsies settled on the island of Corfu but, strangely enough, also those living in the Venetian possessions on the neighboring Epirote coast, Parga, La Bastia, Butrinto, Sopoto, and Chimara. Unlike the other feudal barons of the island, the baron of the fief of the Gypsies alone had the right to bring to trial and punish any of his serfs in all matters of civil or criminal law, with the sole exception of capital punishment, which could be administered only by joint decision with the Venetian governor of the island. Thus, the baron could easily send any of his Gypsy serfs into exile, confine them in prison, make them galley slaves, or use them for *corvée* work.

In addition, many payments, both in money and in kind, were made annually by the serfs to their lord; to be baron of the fief of the Gypsies was, therefore, to hold an office of great financial advantage as well as of high honor. From Thomas Memo's decree we learn also that every married Gypsy attached to the soil was obliged to pay to his lord every four months ten soldi and one hen; further, that every Gypsy had to give to the baron a pair of chickens in August and every married Gypsy had to pay two aspers on Saint Barbarus' feast day, and on the first of May present a Maypole, which, if not accepted by the lord, was to be replaced by the payment of five soldi. In addition, each Gypsy was obliged to pay annually to his lord two hyperperi in white money (*alborum perperos duos*), i.e. silver, in place of *corvée* and, upon marriage, one hyperperon and two good hens.

Moreover, every foreign Gypsy (*cinganus forensis*) was obliged to pay a fee of one hyperperon upon entering or leaving the territory under the jurisdiction of the Venetian governor of Corfu, and all newcomers were forced to make all the contributions mentioned above, exactly like the Gypsies who were already attached to the soil, except that, instead of the ten silver soldi and the hens, they each had to pay twenty soldi. Finally, all married Gypsies who lived in any of the territories under the jurisdiction of the Venetian governor of Corfu had to make all of these contributions as if he were living in the city itself or on any other part of the island of Corfu.<sup>70</sup>

In concluding my discussion of the Corfiote Gypsies, I quote herewith a reference to them in the account of Philippe de Voisins, who journeyed to the Holy Land in 1470, as related by his fellow traveller Jehan de Balesta. De Balesta writes:

"Et de la dicte citté d'Arragossa [i.e. Ragusa] allerent à Modon en la Morerie [i.e. Morea], et laissèrent Torson [i.e. Corfu] à main gauche. Lequel Modon et Torson est subject a la seigneurie de Venize, et est joignant des mescreans; et y

<sup>70</sup> Of great interest also in the history of the Gypsies in Corfu is another document in Italian from the seventeenth century, which gives some interesting information regarding the payment of dues by the Gypsies to their master on the first of May, and states that the fief had then about one hundred Gypsies under their own standard bearer (*alifier et capo*), who reminds us of the *drungarius aciganorum* at Nauplion. (See Lampros, *op. cit.*, 71-2). For further information about the population of the fief of the Gypsies and their occupations in later times, as drawn from Venetian documentary sources see A. Andreades, *Περὶ τῆς οἰκονομικῆς διοικήσεως τῆς Ἑπτανήσου ἐπὶ Βενετοκρατίας*, II (Athens, 1914), 79-81.

habitent audict pais une grande quantité de nations de gens qui se nomment les *Chimbres*, que l'on apelle Boysmes [i.e. Bohemians] en France, qui sont puvres gens et mal conditionés."<sup>71</sup> This is the first and only time, as far as I know, that the name *Chimbres* is given to the Gypsies. P. Bataillard, who first studied this reference thoroughly, was unable to reach any conclusion as to the origin of the name.<sup>72</sup> It has been suggested, however, by S. K. Sakellaropoulos, that the name is a corruption of the Corfiote word σέμπροι, meaning serfs attached to the soil, which was actually the status of most of the Gypsies on the island at that time.<sup>73</sup>

There is no doubt that the Gypsies, who, according to all available documentary evidence, appear in Corfu for the first time in the fourteenth century, must have come there from the Epirote mainland directly across the sea. We have noticed earlier that the lord of the Gypsy fief in Corfu had jurisdiction also over the Gypsies living in the Venetian possessions on the Epirote coast—Parga, La Bastia, Butrinto, Sopoto, and Chimara—a territory known in the late Byzantine period as Vagenetia.<sup>74</sup>

From a Corfiote document, dated November 4, 1373, we learn that there was at that time a stream of poverty stricken immigrants, described as *homines vageniti*, pouring into Corfu from the opposite Epirote coast. Upon their arrival on the island they had to register at the governor's office where a list of their names and the size of their respective families was kept. They were automatically considered vassals of the administration unless they chose to place themselves voluntarily under the jurisdiction of a Corfiote baron, in which case the baron had to pay to the Angevin rulers a poll tax of six grossi (*six grossi per capita*). The same document states further that any baron, who would accept a "man from the Vagenetia" who had not been previously registered at the governor's office, would be deprived of his vassal and would have to pay a fine of one hyperperon.<sup>75</sup> The presence of *homines vageniti* in Corfu is also attested by two Venetian documents, dated January 11, 1413 and September 11, 1413 respectively, which have been published by C. Sathas.<sup>76</sup>

C. Hopf, who was aware of the contents of this Corfiote document, expressed the idea that these *homines vageniti* were none other than the Gypsies who formed later the *feudum acinganorum* in Corfu.<sup>77</sup> It is true that the above documents tell us that the *homines vageniti*, upon arrival in the island of Corfu, had to pay an entrance fee which corresponded exactly to the fee paid by every

<sup>71</sup> Th. Tamizey de Larroque, *Voyage à Jerusalem de Philippe de Voisins, seigneur de Montant* (Paris, 1883), 22–3.

<sup>72</sup> P. Bataillard, "Les Tsiganes appelés Chimbres en Grèce, d'après un voyageur français du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Revue critique*, 18 (1884), 158–63.

<sup>73</sup> S. K. Sakellaropoulos, *Οι Σέμπροι της Κερκύρας* (reprinted from *Εικον. Έπταν. Έμερολ. του Έτους 1913* [Athens, 1912]), 1 ff.

<sup>74</sup> See M. Lascaris, "Vagenetia," *Revue historique du Sud-Est européen*, 19 (1942), 424 ff.; D. Zakythinos, "Μελέται περί της διοικητικής διαιρέσεως και της επαρχιακής διοικήσεως εν τῷ Βυζαντινῷ κράτει," *Έπετ. Έτ. Βυζ. Σπουδών*, 21 (1951), 197 ff.

<sup>75</sup> J. Romanos, *Δημοσία Κερκυραϊκή πράξις λατινιστί συντεταγμένη περί ἀποδόσεως ἐθελοδούλων ἐκ Βαγενετίας τῆς Ἡπείρου δυναστεύοντος ἐν Κερκύρα τοῦ Ταραντίνου ἡγεμόνος Φιλίππου τοῦ Β'* (Corfu, 1882), 2 ff. Cf. Andreades, *op. cit.*, I, 153–4.

<sup>76</sup> Sathas, *op. cit.*, III, 31, 38–40.

<sup>77</sup> Hopf, *Gesch. Griechenlands*, II, 186, and *Einwanderung*, 17–8.

*cinganus forensis* under the same circumstances, but, although Hopf's theory is very plausible, it does not offer definite proof that the *homines vageniti* are necessarily identifiable as the Corfiote Gypsies. It would be safer and undoubtedly far more correct to say that among the *homines vageniti* who emigrated to Corfu, there were possibly many Gypsies from Epirus where they lived at that time in great numbers.

The existence of Gypsy settlements in the mainland across from Corfu is also attested by a fourteenth-century Bulgarian version of the *Life of Saint Barbarus*, a well-known and popular Saint among the Balkan peoples. Constantine Acropolites (*fl. ca. 1300*) informs us that the Saint was born in an African town bearing a name similar to his own, and that he had taken part in a Saracen expedition in the Ionian Sea during the reign of Michael II (820–9). We further learn that the Saracens landed at Nicopolis in Epirus, and that, crossing Ambracia, they proceeded to a place called Dragamestos, where they were defeated. Among the few who survived was Saint Barbarus who, after walking all the way to Nysa (Niš), became a Christian and lived there on the mountain as an anchorite.<sup>78</sup>

On the other hand, the Bulgarian version of the *Life of Saint Barbarus* informs us explicitly that the Saint was an Egyptian by birth, and that he had joined the pirates at the age of twenty-five. He participated in a piratical raid against the Durazzo area (въ дѣръскыѣ страны) on the Albanian coast, which ended in total disaster. Saint Barbarus, however, the Life continues, being secretly a Christian, was the only survivor of the shipwreck, and retired to a deserted place to do penance. A year later he was discovered there by a hunter, who was impressed by the Saint's dark complexion, and, although he was unable to understand the Saint's language, he succeeded in learning that he was a Christian. The hunter immediately reported what he had seen to the local "Egyptians" who were numerous in that region (иже мнѣши въхъ егѣптъскы въ тѣхъ странѣ), and who then went out to meet Saint Barbarus and conversed with him in their own language.<sup>79</sup>

It is beyond doubt, I think, that the Egyptians mentioned in the Bulgarian version as living in large numbers in the Albanian littoral region were Gypsies. We have no evidence whatsoever that Egyptian Arabs lived in Albania or in Epirus in the fourteenth century. On the other hand, we are well informed as to the existence of Gypsy settlements in the Venetian possessions on the Epirote coast at this period. Apparently the author of the Bulgarian version simply tried to place the events of the Arab raid under Michael II in a contemporary setting. So, while in the Greek sources Saint Barbarus is called simply an Egyptian or an African who landed on the Epirote coast, the Bulgarian author shifted the scene further north to Durazzo, where he apparently knew of the existence of

<sup>78</sup> See Constantine Acropolites' Λόγος εἰς τὸν Ἅγιον Βάρβαρον, in A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Ἀνάλεκτα Ἱεροσολυμιτικῆς σταχυολογίας, I (St. Petersburg, 1891), 410. Cf. H. Delehay, "Les Actes de S. Barbarus," *Analecta Bollandiana*, 29 (1910), 276 ff.

<sup>79</sup> The text of the Bulgarian Life is published by A. I. Jacimirskij, "Iz slavjanskikh rukopisej; teksty i zametki," *Učenyja zapiski Imp. Moskovskago Universiteta*, 24 (1899), 42–3. Cf. K. Radčenko, "Einige Bemerkungen zur neugefundenen Abschrift des Lebens des heil. Barbar in bulgarischer Uebersetzung," *Archiv für slavische Philologie*, 22 (1900), 575–94.

Gypsies. As we have already seen, the Gypsies were, at that time, known to the Byzantines too as "Egyptians."

In the course of the fourteenth century the Gypsies seem to have been widely established throughout the Balkan peninsula.

It is often thought that the *c'ngarie* (цѣнгариѣ) mentioned in a chrysobul issued about 1350 by Tsar Stephen Dušan were Gypsies, assigned by the Serbian ruler, together with other groups of workers, to the Monastery of Sts. Michael and Gabriel at Prizren.<sup>80</sup> Although this theory was seriously questioned many years ago by Fr. Miklosich,<sup>81</sup> it still enjoys quite undeservedly wide acceptance.<sup>82</sup> The Serbian scholar St. Novaković<sup>83</sup> has, I think, proven in a definitive manner that the word *c'ngar'* and its variant forms in mediaeval Serbian meant shoemaker. The word *c'ngar'* is simply the mediaeval Serbian form of the Byzantine *τλαγγάρης*, the maker of *τλαγγία*, i.e. shoes, a word originally of Persian derivation. In this light, then, the above-mentioned chrysobul of Dušan does not refer to the Gypsies at all but to a group of shoemakers granted to the Monastery by the Serbian ruler, a practice known in mediaeval Serbia, as we learn also from a similar document by King Milutin issued at the end of the thirteenth century in favor of the Monastery of Chilandar on Mount Athos.<sup>84</sup> In Milutin's document we find the variant term *cegar'* (*c'ngar'*), and here there is no doubt at all that a shoemaker is meant, for the document in question definitely antedates the appearance of the Gypsies in the Balkan countries.

Thus the earliest reference to the Gypsies in the Yugoslav lands is to be found in a Ragusan document dated November 5, 1362,<sup>85</sup> according to which the Republic of Ragusa decided at the request of two Gypsies, Vlachus and Vitanus (*ad petitionem Vlachi et Vitani Egyptiorum*), to instruct Radenus Bratoslauich (Bratoslavić), a local goldsmith, to return to them the eight silver corigia they had deposited with him. By 1378 Gypsies had reached Zagreb, as is illustrated by a document dated May 7, 1378, where there is a reference to them.<sup>86</sup>

All of the above references to the settlement of Gypsies in Yugoslav lands in the fourteenth century provide sufficient evidence, in my opinion, for disproving

<sup>80</sup> In *Glasnik srpskog učenog društva*, 15 (1862), 309; Cf. B. Petriceicu-Hasdeu, "Resturile unei carti de donațiune de pe la anul 1348, emanata de la imperatul serbesc Dušan și relativa la starea sociala a Românilor de peste Dunare," *Archiva istorică a României*, 3 (1867), 191 ff.

<sup>81</sup> Miklosich, *op. cit.*, III, 6.

<sup>82</sup> See e.g. G. Potra, *Contribuțiuni la istoricul Țiganilor din România* (Bucharest, 1939), 20; J. Bloch, *Les Tsiganes* (Paris, 1953), 16; M. A. Mujić, "Položaj Cigana u jugoslovenskim zemljama pod osmanskom vlašću," *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju i istoriju jugoslavenskih naroda pod turskom vladavinom*, 3-4 (1952-3), 143.

<sup>83</sup> St. Novaković, "Cegar' - c'ngar' - τλαγγάρης; τλάγγα - meste," *Archiv für slavische Philologie*, 32 (1911), 383-8.

<sup>84</sup> In L. Petit and B. Korabiev, *Actes de Chilandar, II<sup>eme</sup> partie: Actes Slaves* (Supplement to vol. 19 of *Vizant. Vremennik* [St. Petersburg, 1915]), 398.

<sup>85</sup> This has been published by J. Tadić, *Pisma i uputstva Dubrovačke Republike* (Belgrade, 1935), p. 97, no. 101.

<sup>86</sup> In J. B. Tkalčić, *Povjestni spomenici slobodnog kraljevskog grada Zagreba*, V (Zagreb, 1885), 127: *Item Cigan Nicolaus Cigan contra Petrum primo citatus non comparavit*. For later references about the Gypsies in Croatia see L. Wiener, "Ismaelites," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, N.S., 4 (1910-1), 83 ff.

the theory that the Gypsies came to Serbia along with the Turkish invaders.<sup>87</sup> The pressures caused by the latter were apparently responsible for the immigration of the Gypsies from Anatolia to the Balkans, an event which definitely preceded the actual Turkish conquest of the Balkan peninsula.

In the fourteenth century the Gypsies appear also for the first time in the Eastern Balkans. Documentary evidence shows that they were also in large numbers in Rumanian lands during the fourteenth and ensuing centuries, and by then many of them had been reduced to serfdom and become the property of the ruling prince, the monasteries, or the powerful magnates.

The earliest evidence of Gypsies in Rumania is found in a document issued by Voivode Dan I (1385–86) on October 3, 1385, in favor of the Monastery of the Virgin Mary at Tismana in which the Voivode also confirms the grant of forty Gypsy families (и ацигани ѿ челяди), made by his uncle Voivode Vladislav (Vlaicu or Laico, 1364–ca. 1380), to the Monastery of Saint Anthony at Vodița, a dependency of the Monastery of Tismana.<sup>88</sup> Following this date there are a number of later Rumanian documents in Slavic from the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, which have been discussed by G. Potra.<sup>89</sup>

Here I think I may discuss briefly C. Hopf's theory that the yoke of slavery in Wallachia lay so heavily upon the Gypsy settlers that they migrated south at the very first opportunity, that is, during the general upheaval created by Tsar Dušan's campaigns in the Balkans. According to Hopf, the Gypsies migrated at that time from the Rumanian lands southward to the Greek mainland and the Peloponnese, where we find them, like the Albanians, well established in the fourteenth century.<sup>90</sup> Hopf's theory is not supported by any documentary evidence whatsoever. It is interesting to note here again that all available evidence concerning the Gypsies in Rumania postdates the earliest references to their settlement in Greece. Furthermore, we meet Gypsies in the Greek islands long before the era of Tsar Dušan. A description of a people, easily identifiable as Gypsies, by the Franciscan Friar Symon Semeonis, who visited Candia on the island of Crete in 1323, reads as follows:

"We saw there a people outside the city who declare themselves to be of the race of Ham, and who worship according to the Greek rite. They wander like a cursed people from place to place, not stopping at all, or rarely, in one place longer than thirty days; they live in tents like the Arabs, little oblong black tents."<sup>91</sup> Thus, it is more reasonable to suppose that when the Gypsies first appeared in Thrace—most probably during the first half of the fourteenth century—they spread in various groups throughout Macedonia to the Greek mainland and the islands, and north to Yugoslavia and Rumania.

<sup>87</sup> See C. Jireček, *Staat und Gesellschaft im mittelalterlichen Serbien*, IV (Vienna, 1919), 57.

<sup>88</sup> *Documente privind istoria României; Veacul XIII, XIV și XV*; B: *Țara Românească, 1247–1500* ([Bucharest], 1953), p. 33, no. 22.

<sup>89</sup> Potra, *op. cit.*, 26ff.; cf. C. Giurescu, *Istoria Românilor*, II, pt. 2 (Bucharest, 1943), 481–3.

<sup>90</sup> Hopf, *Einwanderung*, 25–6.

<sup>91</sup> The original text is conveniently reproduced in G. Golubovich, *Biblioteca biobibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Francese*, III (Florence, 1919), 254. Another traveller, Philipp von Hagen, who visited Crete in the 1520's, also reports that he had seen Gypsies in Candia. See L. Conrady, *Vier rheinische Palaestine-Pilgerschriften des XIV, XV, und XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden, 1882), 241. I am indebted to Professor S. Vryonis, Jr., for the latter reference.

It can be seen that information concerning Gypsies provided by our sources is both very scarce and sketchy in character, and it is natural that Byzantine historians, whose main concern was always the recording of official history rather than of marginal events, such as the appearance and manner of existence of Gypsies in Byzantine lands, would hardly have paid any attention to these newcomers. For this reason what little information we have has been acquired indirectly from hagiographical and canonical sources, from works of folk literature, from official Venetian documents, and from travellers' accounts.

To sum up: we must conclude that the appearance of the Gypsies in Byzantine lands is undoubtedly connected with the Seljuk raids in Armenia where the Gypsies, who subsequently appeared in Europe, had stayed for a long time, as the great number of Armenian loan-words in their vocabulary testifies. These continuous raids, which caused the dislocation of the Armenian people and resulted at the end of the eleventh century in the creation of Little Armenia in Cilicia, must have been responsible also for the westward movement of the Gypsies and their invasion of Byzantine Anatolia.

In the second half of the fourteenth century the Gypsies seem to have been well established and settled in large numbers throughout the Balkans. Here again we are tempted, with good reason, to connect their passage from Asia Minor to Thrace, and from there to the various Balkan lands, with the constant advances of the Ottoman Turks in Asia Minor in the first half of the fourteenth century, which culminated in the first settlement of the Ottomans in Europe in 1354 at Tzympe, near Gallipoli. The subsequent Ottoman advances in the Balkans pushed the Gypsies further north until they reached Central Europe, and from there they made their first appearance suddenly in Western Europe early in the fifteenth century.

The evidence from the sources presented here, despite its paucity, enables us to form a certain picture, however inadequate and incomplete, of the life and the condition of the Gypsies within the framework of Byzantine society. We have learned, first of all, that the Gypsies indulged in casting horoscopes, telling fortunes, and in general prophesying the future. In the eleventh century when they first appeared in Byzantium, superstition was very widespread among the Byzantines, reaching from the lower social strata to the highest and including the emperors themselves; so the Gypsies found fertile ground for practicing their traditional arts. We have noted, too, that they were active as bearkeepers, snake charmers, and, in general, as animal trainers; also as acrobats and jugglers. On the other hand, among the sedentary Gypsies of the Venetian colonies in the Peloponnese, there were backsmiths and cobblers; while in Corfu, and also in Rumanian lands they were attached to the soil and reduced to serfdom.

Finally, we may deduce from the number of derogatory references to the Gypsies found in Byzantine folk literature, that they were widely known among the common people, who were the principal readers of this literature, and that they did not enjoy a good reputation. As a matter of fact, their very name came to assume an insulting connotation.

It is hoped that the foregoing pages will not only provide an answer to the much debated problem of the first appearance of the Gypsies in Byzantium, whence they spread subsequently throughout Europe, but also illustrate, although inadequately and superficially, due to our limited sources, a small aspect of Byzantine social history.

## APPENDIX

### I

#### AVOGARIA DI COMUN

NUMERO GENERALE 3649 (RASPE 1442-1450)

MCCCCXLIII, INDICIONE VII, DIE XII AUGUSTI

Pro Johanne Cingano de Neapoli Romanie

Pars posita in consilio de XL<sup>a</sup> propter placitare dominorum Advocatorum comunis quod ista privatio et cassatio facta per virum nobilem ser Matheum Barbaro, que non reperitur in scriptis per quam cassavit Johannes cinganum de essendo drungarium acinganorum, tanquam cassatio et privatio facta contra id quod fieri poterat et debebat et contra privilegia concessa precessoribus et progenitoribus dicti Johannis tam per dominium nostrum quam per virum nobilem ser Octavianum Bono precessorem dicti ser Mathei Barbaro, incidatur, cassetur, revocetur et anulletur cum omnibus suis dependentibus et secutis, adeo quod nullius existat efficacie vel vigoris ac si nunquam facta fuisset. Revertente dicto Johanne in dicto suo officio ut prius erat et in illis terminis, iure, statu, conditione et esse quibus erat ante quam dicta cassatio facta fuisset, cum dictus ser Matheus cui mandatum fuit quod non recederet de Venetiis quin dimittat comissionem pro hac causa expedienda et parere noluerit. Datis atque receptis in ipso consilio ballotis 33. Fuerunt non sincere 5. De non 1 et de parte 27 et sic captum fuit ut in dicta parte cavetur.

### II

#### FROM IL LIBRO A COPERTA DI LEGNO DELLA FAMIGLIA PROSSALENDI DEL MAGGIO.

Fol. 3. Copia tratta dalli libri de' Privilegi et Sentenze del Feudo Gianello delli Habitabuli tenuti nella Cancellaria Feudal presentati nell'Ecc<sup>mo</sup> Cons<sup>o</sup>, di 40 CV.

Nos Thomas Memo pro Ill<sup>mo</sup> ac Ampliss<sup>mo</sup> Ducali Venetiarum Dominio Bailus ac Capitaneus Civitatis ac Insulae Corphorum Universis et singulis litteras nostras patentes inspecturis patere volumus expresse, quod cum coram nobis tamquam Capitaneo comparuisset spectabilis vir et omni virtute ac magnanimitate praeditus et ornatus Dominus Michael de Ugotis Nobilis Co. et Baronus filius q<sup>m</sup> strenui Francisci et nepotis magnifici q<sup>m</sup> Dñi Rizardi de Ugotis avi sui olim Dñi Idrunti, qui quidem Dominus Michael a virtutibus paternis et avitis minime degenerare videtur et exposuit quod cum per Ill<sup>mo</sup> et Exell<sup>mo</sup> Dominium nostrum et suum Exc. Cons. X cum adictionibus sibi et filiis ac discendentibus suis masculis secundum morem Imperii Romaniae concessum fuisset Feudum quod habebat q<sup>m</sup> Ser Ioannelus de Habitabulo, et etiam Cinganos, tam pariter cum illis applicatur, cum hac condit.<sup>e</sup> quam tenere debebat et solvebat Gamerae nostrae Corphorum Ipp. C. in anno qua propter petebat et cum instantia requirebat juxta mores et statuta dicti imperii Romaniae investiri debere de dicto Feudo—fol. 3, v.—et Cinganis cum modis, conditionibus, utilitatibus, praerogativis, honorificentis, jurisdictionibus et auctoritatibus solitis et consuetis, cum quibus Ser Aloysius de Citro et spectabilis Dñus Adam de S. Ippolito et q<sup>m</sup> Ser Ioannelus de Habitabulo praecessores sui praedictum Feudum et Cinganorum habebant, tenebant et usufructuabant, unde audita dicta requisitione et petitione ac viso Privilegio concessa eidem Dño Michaeli Barono nostro per Ill<sup>mo</sup> Ducale Dominium nostrum, quod nobis constat omnia

praedicta exposita per ipsum vera esse. Datum in Ducali Palatio die tertia mensis Septembris 1464 Indict. Decima tertia, et intellecta Jurisdic.<sup>ne</sup> quam habebat Dominum dicti Pheudi super dictos Cinganos sicut apparet testibus Off.<sup>o</sup> Cancel.<sup>ae</sup> nostrae et de mandato nostro examinatis quib<sup>s</sup> nobis constat quondam Ser Aloysium de Citro et spectabilem Dom. Adam de S. Ippolito et q<sup>m</sup> Ser Ianelum de Habitabulo olim baronos et feudatarios et dominos praedicti Feudi, et Cinganorum habuisse jus, dominium et potestatem in dicto Feudo Cinganorum de administrando jus in Cinganis tam in civilibus quam in criminalibus salvo quod de homicidio, habentes libertatem sentiendi, condemnandi et absolvendi sicut eis videbitur, visisque conditionibus et juribus cum quibus dictum Feudum alias venditum fuit Ser Jacobo Dondi per Regim. nostrum Corphorum, sicut constat ex Off.<sup>o</sup> eiusdem Cancel. nostrae quae jura omnia dictus Ser per biennium—fol. 4—habuit, tenuit et possedit dictum Feudum Cinganorum administravit omnia jura praedicta et exegit de dictis Cinganis, ut infra, videlicet, quod quilibet Cinganus maritatus terrenus solvebat sibi omnibus quatuor mensibus soldos decem argenteos et unam galinam. Item de mense Augusti solvebat sibi unum par pularum, Item ad nundinas Sancti Barbari solvebat et solvit aspros duos pro singulo maritato, Item die primo mensis Magii quilibet Cinganus maritatus praesentat domino suo unum Maium (et est in liberate domini et baroni accipere illud Maium) aut soldos quinque argenteos, Item quilibet solvit pro angaria alborum perperos duos in anno, et quilibet quando se maritat solvit perperum unum et duas bonas galinas domino suo; Item quilibet Cinganus forensis quando intrat sub jurisdictione solvit pro intratura perperum unum, et quando vult abire et recedere a jurisd.<sup>ne</sup> solvit etiam unum alium perperum; Item dicti forenses solvunt omnes alias angarias suprascriptas sicut terrenus, salvo quod non solvit galinas et soldos decem argenteos, sed loco ipsarum rerum solvunt pro omni Cingano soldos viginti quinque; Item quilibet Cinganus maritatus habitans sub jurisdictione nostra solvit omnes angarias praedictas ac si habitarent in civitate et insula Corphorum; nos igitur intendentes omni mira, studio et vigilantia ad ea quae conve—fol. 4, v.—niunt ad utile proprium et honorem Illm<sup>i</sup> Dominii nostri antedicti tenore praesentium dictum dominum Michael de Ugotis baronum nostrum, ut omni virtute et sincerissima fide praestantem coram nobis in Ecclesia Cathedrali ante altare Domini Sancti Arsenii genibus flexis constitutum, et humiliter petentem ac requirentem de dicto Feudo Cinganorum se investiri debere cum modis, conditionibus et jurisdictionibus omnibus suprascriptis juxta mores statuti Imperii Romaniae, ex auctoritate nobis tamquam capitaneo praestita a praelibato Illmo Ducali Dominio Venetiarum eundem investivimus, et earum series investiri cum annulo aureo quem in manibus nostris tenebamus, de dicto Feudo Cinganorum eidem concessio per Serenis.<sup>mum</sup> Ducale Dominium nostrum ut supra cum omnibus modis, jurisdictionibus, praerogativis, honorificentis, conditionibus et auctoritatibus suprascriptis ut superius specificatis et expressis, et etiam de omnibus aliis et singulis jurisdictionibus, quas ipse haberet contra ipsos Cinganos, si quaesunt, quae hic expressa non fuissent ita et taliter, quod quilibet Cinganus maritatus stans et habitans sub regimine nostro tam in civitate, burgo et insula Corphorum, quam sub jurisdictione nostra, videlicet, Parghae, Bastiae, Butroti, Sopoti et Cimarae, et aliorum locorum tenentium, ut debeat rendere et respondere Dño Michaeli et filiis—fol. 5—et descendentiis suis masculis omnia jura superius expressa delato tamen prius juram.<sup>to</sup> eidem Dño Michaeli fidelissimo et integerissimo barono nostro super Evangelium gloriosissimi Sancti Marci Evangelistae se ligium homagium et fidelitatem integram semper observaturum domino nostro eidem, fidem inviolatam semper servare, osculantes insuper ipsum, super ritum et morem ejusdem Statuti Imperii Romaniae per medium os suum in signum sinceritatis nostrae et fidelitatis suae per ipsum observandae. In quorum omnium fidem robur et testimonium praedictum Privilegium fieri jussimus et tribus sigillis Sancti Marci appensione muniri. Datum in Can.<sup>a</sup> nostra die 24 Martii 1470.